

Regional Geospatial Resource Center Proposal – Eastern Idaho

Scope and purpose

GIS in eastern Idaho has been developing at a steady rate over the last 20 years. Pockets of GIS infrastructure exist throughout the region in the public, private, and academic sectors. A Regional Resource Center would be the backbone to provide structure and cohesion and consequently promote commerce, enhance government, and create more opportunities for education. An RRC would anchor the objectives of ISDI in eastern Idaho, and support state efforts from the grassroots up. An RRC in eastern Idaho would operate under the following objectives:

1. Support and promote geographic information systems
2. Support and promote ISDI activities
3. Facilitate GIS education and training
4. Enhance professional networking and collaboration
5. Promote standards related to data quality and accessibility
6. Provide technical support
7. Recommend, promote, and maintain efficiency solutions related to:
 - a. Professionals with specific skills and knowledge
 - b. Software and hardware
 - c. Overhead
 - d. Existing data
8. Promote data publication and dissemination

Geographic Area Served / Represented

We propose a RRC to be established in a nine-county region of Eastern Idaho as shown in the map below. This geographic region is based on economic and transportation factors, and is an established region as used by existing state agencies such as the Idaho Transportation Department District # 6. This geographic extent is also appropriate as the average travel time would be around 30 minutes to an hour, and the worst case travel time would be around three hours.



Participants and Organizations

Potential participants exist in three categories:

1. *Government:* The nine counties, the respective cities, and other local governmental agencies would set the direction for the RRC. Participation from State and Federal regional agencies, Idaho National Laboratory (INL), Bureau of Land Management, USGS, and the US Forest Service would strengthen the effort.
2. *Academia:* University Place (ISU), BYU-Idaho, and extension services of the University of Idaho comprise the academic infrastructure.
3. *Private Sector:* This category could include development agencies; utility companies such as Rocky Mtn. Power, Fall River Electric, Intermountain Gas, etc; and could also include natural resource and non-profit agencies such as Teton Regional Land Trust.

Proposed Physical Location

Administration of the Eastern Idaho RRC would initially utilize resources from participating entities. These functions would be a natural fit for University Place in Idaho Falls. Many of the other activities could occur at locations throughout the region. For example, training events and meetings could be held at BYU Idaho, or ECIPDA. As the RRC matures, an independent location could be acquired for the purpose of administration, and carrying out the objectives outlined in this proposal.

Services and Resources

- Grant administration for regional funding opportunities
- Representation responsibilities on relevant statewide committees
- Provide a regional forum for discussion, collaboration, and training
- Facilitate implementation of, and monitor maintenance of regional ISDI and geospatial programs and products by providing technical support for data/metadata creation and maintenance
- Provide data discovery, use, and dissemination by leveraging the power of geospatial web services

- Staffing** (phased in at various levels as sustainable financial resources are identified)
- Eastern RRC Geospatial Extension Coordinator (Grants, committee representation, training)
 - Eastern RRC Technical Staff (data models, data standards, metadata, web services & applications)
 - Idaho State Tax Commission (parcel mapping support)
 - Graduate/ undergraduate staff, Internships

Local Champions

Potential organizations utilizing GIS who have demonstrated proficiency and regional influence throughout the region might include Idaho National Laboratory, Idaho State University, University of Idaho, Eastern Idaho Regional GIS, and ECIPDA.

Funding

Initially, we will leverage resources that are already in place. Funds are required to support a geospatial coordinator and technical staff as listed above. Some financial and leadership support must ideally come from the state, but we would expect to supplement these funds with other proposals and grant opportunities.

Summary

RRCs fit the geographic diversity of Idaho. Having an RRC in eastern Idaho is critical to the ISDI vision. Many elements of the RRC in Eastern Idaho already exist. With the ISDI strategic and business plans in place, we anticipate that organizing these elements to form an RRC will be a natural course of action.